

In the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for facilitating the purchase of telecommunication services, the method comprising:
storing in memory information associated with one or more of a plurality of service providers, the information being used to determine one or more responses to a request to purchase at least one telecommunication service, each of the one or more responses being associated with at least one of the plurality of service providers and each of the one or more responses being further associated with a related cost for the at least one telecommunication service and an indication associated with the geographic footprint wherein the telecommunication service is available;
establishing a session over a network for considering the purchase of the at least one telecommunication service;
receiving the request at a computer on the network, wherein the request is received after the information associated with one or more of a plurality of service providers is stored;
determining the at least one response in response to the received request based at least upon the indication associated with the geographical footprint; and
preventing a requester from accepting the identified response after the session is terminated by the requester.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
terminating the session.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
permitting access by service providers to the stored information during the session.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
denying access by the service providers to the stored information during the session.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
denying access by a service provider, during the session, to the stored information,
wherein the response to which access is denied is the same as the at least one
response.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
permitting each service provider to modify the stored information to reflect changes in
the at least one telecommunication service provided by the service provider.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for provisioning telecommunication service, comprising:
a database containing a set of responses to purchase requests for telecommunication services, each response reflecting at least one telecommunication service offering associated with a service provider, a related cost for the telecommunication service offering, and an indication associated with the geographic footprint wherein the telecommunication service is available, each response being determined based at least upon the indication associated with the geographical footprint;
a computer in communication with a network and the database, to establish a session for
(i) receiving a purchase request on behalf of a buyer including information indicating a requested telecommunication service for at least one consumer, (ii) accessing the stored set of responses to purchase requests for at least one response reflecting at least one telecommunication service offering capable of satisfying the requested telecommunication service for the at least one consumer, (iii) receiving an acceptance to the response during the session; and (iv) preventing the acceptance to the response after the session is terminated ~~by the requester.~~

9. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for purchasing telecommunication services during a session, the method comprising:
storing a set of responses in memory to purchase requests for telecommunication services, each response reflecting at least one telecommunication service offering associated with a service provider, a related cost for the telecommunication

service offering, and an indication associated with the geographic footprint wherein the telecommunication service is available, each response being determined based at least upon the indication associated with the geographical footprint:

receiving a purchase request at a computer on a network during the session including information indicating a requested telecommunication service;
accessing the stored set of responses to purchase requests during the session for at least one response reflecting at least one telecommunication service offering capable of satisfying the requested telecommunication service;
permitting a requestor to accept the at least one response during the session; and preventing the service provider from modifying the set of responses during the session.

REMARKS

The Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed June 1, 2007 and the Advisory Action mailed October 3, 2007. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1, 2 and 4-9 were pending in this patent application. Claims 1, 2 and 4-9 stand rejected. Claims 1, 8, and 9 are hereby amended. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Advisory Action

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner indicates that Applicant does not claim “what is the function of the indication [associated with the geographical footprint] and the result.” Applicants have amended Claim 1 to include “determining the at least one response in response to the received request based at least upon the indication associated with the geographical footprint.” Applicants have amended Claims 8 and 9 to include “each response being determined based at least upon the indication associated with the geographical footprint.” Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 8, and 9 as amended clearly claim the function of the indication associated with the geographical footprint, and a result of the use of the indication associated with the geographical footprint.

Priority Claim

The priority claim has been addressed in responses to prior office actions.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112:

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner regarding the rejection under 35 USC § 112, such limitation is not necessary to overcome any of the cited prior art and Claims 1 and 8 have been amended by Applicants.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shoham et al. (U.S. Patent 6,584,451).

The Examiner asserts, as had been asserted for so many prior art references that were the subject of rejections that have since been withdrawn, that Shoham discloses “preventing a requester from accepting the identified response after the session is terminated” as recited by Claims 1 and 8. As has been the case with each of the previous recited references, Shoham has no such disclosure. The Examiner cites Column 6, lines 1-8 of Shoham for such an assertion. Column 6, lines 1-8 discusses how and when it will be permitted for a **SELLER** to change pricing schedules, and has no relevance to preventing a requester of a service from doing anything. In fact, the disclosure of Shoham’s auction in such regard is similar to but weaker than the prior rejection of the Examiner using the Johnson reference, which was previously withdrawn by the Examiner. Many of the comments made with regard thereto are equally applicable to Shoham.

Further, the Examiner asserts that Hanson teaches matching buyers to sellers in a specified geographic region. In fact, Hanson teaches only the selection of which advertisements to embed in content to a user of interactive information or entertainment services. Hanson does not teach presenting a response to a request to purchase telecommunications services, wherein the response is associated with a geographic footprint.

Further, the Examiner provides no basis for why one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify Shoham with the teachings of Hanson. The fact that telecommunications services may be desirable only to consumers within a particular geographic footprint has no relevance to Shoham’s auction site for the purchase of general products. A seller of products has no reason to care where a consumer resides. In fact, the broader the audience of purchasers that can be reached by a system such as Shoham the better. Shoham both inherently and explicitly teaches away from limiting the pooling of consumers based on geography. See columns 1 and 2. Shoham teaches aggregating as many buyers as possible who are widely dispersed geographically through a vehicle like the Internet. See columns 1 and 2. Imposing a geographic restriction would limit the benefit of such aggregation. Because of the Internet and similar networks, Shoham teaches that “proximity is not a barrier in the present system.” See column 2, lines 27 through 28. Thus, the Examiner has presented no basis for combining the teachings of Shoham with Hanson, other than stating that it would be obvious to do so with no basis for such conclusory statement. On the contrary, even if the teachings in Hanson were as asserted,

combining a geographic limitation from Hanson would be directly counter to the primary goals and teachings of Shoham and would limit the effectiveness of Shoham's invention. **A rejection under 35 USC §103 cannot be sustained when one of the references clearly teaches away from the very feature that is asserted to be taught by the other reference.**

Contrary to the Examiner's last assertion that the fact that the claimed invention concerns telecommunications services is not relevant to functionality, the geographic footprint is one of many types of data relevant to telecommunications services that directly impact the functionality of the claimed invention. The fact is that a transaction system for purchasing telecommunications services includes many functional differences that require the inclusion of data that is irrelevant to a transaction system for purchasing other products such as consumer products. Clearly the claimed recitation of a geographic footprint is not merely descriptive material and is not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the asserted combination of Shoham and Hanson.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that amended Claim 1, Claims 2 and 4 through 7 that depend from Claim 1, amended Claim 8, and Claim 9 are allowable over Shoham in view of Hanson. The Examiner has presented Applicants with numerous references that purportedly render the claims of the recited invention unpatentable, but which have all been shown to be deficient. As this case was filed almost eight years ago on October 22, 1999, reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.